

Tjeerd de Graaf (Leeuwarden 1938) studied physics and slavic languages in Groningen. In 1969 he completed his PhD in theoretical astrophysics and in 1970-71 he did research at the University of Cambridge (UK). Between 1974 and 2003 he taught phonetics at the University of Groningen, during which time he specialized on the phonetic aspects of ethnolinguistics.

He made his first field trip in 1990 with a Japanese expedition to the minorities of Sakhalin (Russian Federation). Since then, he has contributed to various research projects concerning endangered languages and the use of sound archives for the study of ethnic minorities in Russia, often working closely with Russian and Japanese colleagues. For his research projects he received financial support from the European Union (INTAS) and the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO). In 1998 de Graaf received a Doctorate Honoris Causa from the University of St.Petersburg for his work in the field of ethnolinguistics. In recent years he contributed to the use of historical (sound)data for the study and safeguarding of endangered languages ([Witsen Project](#)). Since 2006 some of his projects have been financially supported by the [Endangered Archives Programme](#) at the British Library.

Since 2003, Tjeerd de Graaf is senior research fellow at the [Mercator Research Centre](#) of the Fryske Akademy. He is also a board member of the [Foundation for Endangered Languages](#) and the [Foundation for Siberian Cultures](#), and contributes to the [work of UNESCO](#) in the field of endangered languages. In 2003, he spent a semester as visiting professor at the University of St.Petersburg, and in 2004 and 2005, he worked as guest researcher at the [Slavic Research Center](#) of Hokkaido University (Japan).